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CELAC
Comunidad de Estados
Latinoamericanos y Caribeños

**CELAC intervention at the interactive discussion at the
High-Level Thematic Debate in support of the process towards the 2016 Special Session of
the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem
7 May 2015**

I have the honour to intervene on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Recently during the Third CELAC Summit held in Belen, on 29 January 2015 we adopted a Special Declaration in which we recognized that the world drug problem has implications in public health, public safety and well-being of humanity, particularly children and adolescents, also undermines the rule of law, the democratic institutions, the political stability and affects the development, that, therefore, must be addressed in accordance with the principle of common and shared responsibility, from a comprehensive, balanced, multidisciplinary approach based on full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, based on policies and actions towards the welfare and health of individuals, in accordance with the three UN Conventions on drugs.

We emphasized the importance of preserving the welfare, quality of life and respect for the human rights and the inclusion of the human person as the center of the drug policies , as well as the need to promote administrative and legislative measures in the field of health, education and social inclusion to prevent the abuse of drugs, psychotropic substances and new psychoactive substances, with a strengthened, balanced multidisciplinary and comprehensive approach to reduce both supply and demand, as well as, to reduce the negative economic and social consequences of this phenomenon.

CELAC Reaffirms that addressing the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility requiring effective international cooperation, as well as, comprehensive, balanced, and multidisciplinary strategies and policies addressed to reduce the supply and demand in accordance with national laws and the three UN Conventions on drugs and other relevant international instruments, fully respecting the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, particularly the respect for national sovereignty and non interference in the internal affairs of States.

CELAC stresses the need for a strengthened, balance, multidisciplinary and comprehensive approach to reducing supply and demand, as well as to reduce the negative economic and social consequences of this phenomenon. Addressing the issue requires urgent and sufficient technical



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assistance and support to all affected States, including transit States, in order to promote the capacities of such States to address all negative consequences of illicit drugs.

We recognize that policies on demand reduction to address the world drug problem must be made by adopting an approach with a gender perspective and vulnerable groups given full respect for human rights, and must be designed and implemented with a focus on gender, vulnerable groups, public health and prevention of violence and crime, as well as the need to develop, strengthen and implement, in accordance with the reality of each State, strategies that prioritize prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration, as well as reducing violence, linked to the problem in order to strengthen the social fabric and well-being of people.

CELAC encourages Member States, within the framework of their national legislation to work together with relevant stakeholders, including academia and civil society to contribute to the efforts of States to address the world drug problem

CELAC's First Ministerial Meeting on the world drug problem held in Antigua, Guatemala, on 13 and 14 May 2014 was important for strengthening regional cooperation to address the world drug problem with an integrated and balanced approach. We look forward to the Second Ministerial Meeting to be held in Quito later this month.

CELAC emphasizes that the 2016 Special Session will be an important occasion for a broad, transparent, inclusive discussion among Member States, based on scientific evidence, and taking note of national experiences and best practices.

CELAC emphasizes the importance of strengthening within the framework of national policies, local economic development through programs of comprehensive, alternative and sustainable development, including, when appropriate, those with preventive alternative approach, as a set of important measures to counteract the negative consequences of the world drug problem.

Based on regional experience, CELAC Members recognize the importance of ensuring that drug policies contribute to the prevention of social damage, such as violence, exclusion and the weakening of social ties.

CELAC reiterates its call upon the International Community to strengthen international cooperation on the drug world problem, to jointly address this problem by promoting and encouraging comprehensive policies on this issue, in accordance with the international commitments undertaken by the States and emphasizes the importance of a broad, transparent, inclusive and based on scientific evidence discussion among Member States. It is important,



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when appropriate, to give due consideration, to relevant inputs of regional and subregional organizations and processes and to strengthen cross-regional cooperation.

CELAC State Members reiterate the convenience of seeking alternatives to the imprisonment of consumers, especially considering care, rehabilitation, and social and productive reintegration as a form to counteract the addiction of drug-dependent victims, including a gender approach, especially by increasing access to rehabilitation, comprehensive health care, and social reinsertion programs.

We recognize the principal role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its subsidiary bodies, together with the International Narcotics Control Board, as the United Nations organs with prime responsibility for drug control matters. We further consider important to promote systemic coherence and greater participation, engagement and coordination among other United Nations, mechanisms and entities, such as the World Health Organization.

We welcome the decision of the General Assembly to convene a special session on the World Drug Problem in 2016, and encourage a fruitful, wide-ranging and pragmatic debate. We reaffirm the need for an inclusive preparatory process that includes extensive substantive consultations, allowing organs, entities and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, relevant international and regional organizations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to fully contribute to the process. We reaffirm also that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the central policymaking body within the UN system dealing with drug-related matters shall lead that process by addressing all organizational and substantive matters, inviting the President of the General Assembly to support, guide and stay involved in the process.

We thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this High Level Thematic Debate in support of the process towards the 2016 Special Session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem, and we look forward to the Chair's summary of the discussions to be prepared by the President of the General Assembly.

CELAC Members will actively participate in the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs in 2016, and its preparatory process, in order to contribute to the examination of the progress, achievements and challenges on the task of dealing with the world drug problem from a comprehensive, transparent and inclusive debate, to improve and strengthening drug policies and their implementation.

Thank you.